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and
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No. 51

1877

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No. 51.

ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR.

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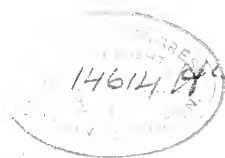
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IN THREE ACTS.

WITH THE CAST OF CHARACTERS, COSTUMES, SIDES OF ENTRANCES AND
EXIT, RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE DRAMATIS PERSONÆ,
TIME OF REPRESENTATION, ETC., ETC.

NEW YORK:
HAPPY HOURS COMPANY,
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ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE OR WAR.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

FRANCIS BLOUNT, Esq., (63), *A Country Squire.*

FRANK BLOUNT, (22), *His Nephew.*

BUTTONS, (26), *His Footman.*

CONSTANCE TREVOR, (21), *A Young Heiress under the guardianship of SQUIRE BLOUNT.*

JEMIMA, (22), *Her maid, an advocate of woman's rights, including the RITES of matrimony.*

COSTUMES.

Squire Blount.—First dress: Grey wig, white cravat, cut-away coat, drab vest, brown breeches, and gaiters. Second dress: Grey wig (curled), pink satin neck-tie, white vest, blue coat, bright buttons, light trousers, nosegay.

Frank Blount.—Light vest and trousers, frock coat.

Buttons.—Footman's livery, hair powdered.

Constance.—Light morning costume.

Jemima.—Chinz or muslin dress, apron with pockets, white cap, with colored ribbons.

PROPERTIES.

ACT I.—Carpet covering stage. Easy chairs R. and L. Couch L. Library chairs. Library table, with draft paper, writing materials, inkstand, pens, &c., on it, R.C. Large wardrobe, with back to open for a character to enter from behind, placed U.E.R. Bookcases R.C. and L.C. against flats. Another bookcase U.E.L. Newspaper for BUTTONS.

ACT II.—Same furniture set as in Act I. Large bandbox with wedding dress in it. Letter.

ACT III.—Large nosegay for button-hole. Hand-bell discovered on R.C. table.

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ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*The Library at Oakhurst Park, the seat of SQUIRE BLOUNT. Centre doors, interior backing. Easy chairs R. and L. Couch L. Library chairs. Table, with writing materials, R.C. Large wardrobe U.E.R. Bookcases against the flats, R. and L. and U.E.L.*

BUTTONS discovered sitting in large easy chair, with one leg over the arm, and the other resting on edge of table, reading morning paper.

Buttons. Now, isn't this enough to drive a fellow wild? Here's another furrin artiste made a fust happearence!—"blaze of triumph!" "called three times before the curtain," *et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.* When will native talent get a chance? Here am I, wegetating a hundred miles from Londing, wearing this ojus livery, studying Shakespur between hintervals of waiting at table and hanswering bells, and doomed to bury in this manly buzzum all 'ope of treading the classic stage which I am formed to adorn! (*Rises.*) Look at them cawves!—all natural!—no padding! Look at my figger! (*Struts.*) Then the pains I've took to cultivate my voice, and to polish up my pronounciation of Henglish! Long before this, I should have jined Mr. Gonzalvo Montmorency's *troupe*, if master's ward, Miss Constance Trevor, hadn't arrived—with that loveliest of all ladies' maids, my Jemima. Oh, scissors! my Jemima! Why do you 'arshly refuse to become Mrs. Buttons, except on condition of my giving up *hall* ideas of the stage, and takin' a public-ouse. (*Strikes attitude.*)

"O, woman! in our hours of hease,
Uncerting, coy, and 'ard to please!"

as Milton beautifully remarks, somewhere or other, in Robinson Crusoe lost, or somebody else.

"But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks?
It *his* the heast! and——"

and Jemima is the young party, as "is the sun!"

Enter JEMIMA, S.E.L.

Jemima. (L.C.) What! acting again, Mr. Buttons? I thought—

Buttons. (R.C.) Forgive me, dearest, this once. And, oh! don't call me "Mr. Buttons," it sounds so cold! (*Sentimentally.*) Speak of me as Chawles! There's more fire in *Chawles*!

Jemima. Well, then, Charles, I must tell you, once for all, that if you don't give up all idea of play-acting, there's a hend to levery-thing between us! Otherways, I prefer to remain single. I stand up for Woman's Rights!

Buttons. Including the *riles* of matrimony, dearest, I 'ope?

Jemima. Certingly, you may 'ope. Man was born to 'ope! That *his* Woman's Rights! I've saved up a good bit of money by 'ard work, and I don't intend that any 'usband of *mine* shall waste it among a lot of play-hactresses. You *know* I'm fond of you, Buttons—I mean Charles!—'ow do you think I should like to see you playing *Romeo* at Drury Lane Theaytre to one of those furriu hactresses who indulge in a flowery *name* and wear ginger—I mean auburn hair—that is *blonde*.

Buttons. But, darling Jemima——

Jemima. Don't "darling Jemima" me, Charles; I won't hear of it. Charles, (*admiringly*) you *know* you're a fine man, Charles.

Buttons. (*Simpering, and showing off his calves.*) Well, of course, you know, I can't help it if the wimming *will* fall in love with me!

Jemima. (*Solemnly.*) Well, look here, Charles. If hever, after we're married, you give me cause for jealousy—I'm a hadvocate of Woman's Rights—and (*rapidly and shrilly,*) I'll tear your heyes out!

Buttons. Say no more, Jemima! It's done! Adieu to the stage! I've done with Shekespur! (*Pathetically.*) Good bye, old Sheke!

"Fare thee well!—and if for hever——"

I mean, we'll take the public-'ouse. You'll make a hout-and-hout landlady, and I'll attend to the cellar. The British public sha'n't be pisoned with strong drink at *hour* establishment! Won't I water the beer!

Jemima. Charles! I'm shocked! Have you so soon forgotton your school catechism?

Buttons. (*Bewildered.*) The—which?

Jemima. Does it not say, Charles, (*solemnly*), "Thou shalt not commit adulteration?"

Buttons. (*Wheedling her, and chucking her under the chin.*) "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck Till thou applaud the performance!"

Enter SQUIRE C.D., looks on amazed from behind.

Buttons. At hall events, with you on the premises, dearest, there'll be one fust-rate harticle in the stock, and no mistake! Oh, *Jemima!* (*Embraces her.*) Oh, scissors!

Squire. (*Coming down c., coughs, they separate.*) What the deuce does all this mean?

Buttons. (R.) Please, sir, I was explaining your family arms to *Jemima.*

Squire. (c.) But I don't see why your explanation should necessitate your throwing your arms round *Jemima.* (*To JEMIMA.*) Give my compliments to Miss Trevor, and tell her I shall be glad to be favored with her company for five minutes. (*Exit JEMIMA, S.E.L.*) Charles, take my best blue coat out of the wardrobe, give it a good brushing, and lay it ready in my dressing-room.

(*BUTTONS takes coat out of wardrobe, U.E.R.*)

Buttons. "To such base uses may we come, Horatio!"

(*Exit S.E.R.*)

Squire. Here comes Constance! Now for it!

Enter CONSTANCE TREVOR, S.E.L.

Squire. (R.C., *advancing to meet her.*) Radiant as ever! Let me give you a chair. (*Places chair for CONSTANCE, and seats himself in chair by her side.*) Ahem! Ahem! (*Confused.*) I beg pardon; what did you say?

Constance. (L.C.) I didn't speak, sir. I was waiting for you to speak.

Squire. Eh?—oh, yes, certainly, of course. You were waiting for me to speak. Certainly—of course! (*With sudden energy.*) Constance, I'm your guardian! It's my duty to remind you that by poor Jack Trevor's will, you must marry within the twelve months following your twenty-first birthday, or half your fortune is to go—to found an Asylum for Spinsters.

Constance. Then, of course, sir, there will be a corner reserved for me?

Squire. It's not a subject for joking, I assure you. By your father's will, a wedding-dress is to be provided a month before your twenty-second birthday; and you are to name the object of your choice a month beforehand. And if I disapprove of your choice, you are to lose half your fortune.

Constance. Ah, but surely, guardian, you wouldn't be so cruel?

Squire. We shall see. But, do you mean to say that after all the care that has been taken to keep you at a distance from the young

puppies of the present day, you have actually fixed upon one of them as the object of your choice?

Constance. Oh dear, no, sir.

Squire. No one? Are you quite sure?

Constance. No one, sir, I assure you! (*Aside.*) Poor dear Frank! May the Recording Angel wink at the unavoidable fib! (*Aloud.*) Indeed, sir, I have a great aversion to marriage. (*Aside.*) Another for the Recording Angel! (*Laughs aside.*)

Squire. (*Persuasively.*) But, my dear Constance—that is—under certain circumstances? Think of the money you would sacrifice by remaining single! I don't say you should marry one of your modern, fast, helter-skelter, young scapegraces, who would make ducks and drakes of your money,—but, supposing you were to meet with a prudent, steady—ahem!—middle-aged gentleman of say sixt—I mean fifty-eight, or thereabouts; don't you think—

Constance. What can be the use of thinking on such a subject, sir? I don't know any such gentleman; and if I *did* make such a choice, (*pretending to sob*), I suppose you wouldn't approve of it.

Squire. Be calm, darling, be calm! What would you say, now, if I were to tell you that I have looked out for you; that I have found an object worthy of your choice; and that I am ready to give him my hearty approval?

Constance. I'm sure it's very kind of you, guardy—very. You always have been too good and kind to me, I don't believe *any* one ever loved me as much as you. (*Aside.*) I'm getting quite nervous about the Recording Angel!

Squire. (*With great difficulty going on to his knees.*) Constance! I am the man! I am not young—that is, I might be older—but I am rich, (*coughing*) and strong and hearty; and I'll make you a good husband. Will you become Mrs. Francis Blount?

Constance. (*Suppressing her laughter.*) Hadn't you better get up, sir? You know, if the rheumatism *should* come on— Let me help you up, sir.

Squire. (*Trying to get up, winces with pain in his knee, and remains kneeling.*) No, no! Here I'll remain, until I have your answer. Come, Constance, why shouldn't you say at once you'll become Mrs. Blount?

Constance. Well, really, sir—as you say—why shouldn't I? But you know my aversion to marriage. Give me till this afternoon for reflection. After lunch I will give you my answer, here. (*Sentimentally.*) I fear I shall find it difficult to say “No!” (*Coquettishly, and trying to move away.*) For, really, you have such coaxing ways, that I don't know if I shall—

Squire. Then say “Yes” at once!

Constance. No, no! After lunch!

(*She breaks from him and runs off* S.E.L., leaving SQUIRE still kneeling before her empty chair.

Enter BUTTONS, S.E.R. Tableau.

Squire. (Trying in vain to rise.) Now then, you blockhead, what are you staring at? Can't you come here, and help me up?

Buttons. (Smothering a laugh aside.) Beg parding, sir. Thought you were a saying of your prayers.

Squire. So I have been saying my prayers, sirrah! Now—(*BUTTONS helps him to rise. SQUIRE winces considerably,*)—now, what the dence brings you here.

Buttons. Letter for you, sir.

(*Hands letter.*)

Squire. A letter from Frank! (*To BUTTONS.*) You may go.

Buttons. Yezzir.

(*Melodramatically.*) “Who would bear the whips and scorns of time;

The oppressor's wrong; the proud man's contumely;

The pangs——”

Squire. (Looking up.) What!

(*Hits him on the shoulder from behind.*)

Buttons. Yezzir!

(*Exit, rapidly, S.E.R.*)

Squire. (Reading.) “My dear uncle, I have just arrived at the Blount Arms Hotel; and hope to be with you a few minutes hence. I am engaged to be married to a most charming girl, who is staying at the house of a particular friend of mine not many miles from here. My particular friend is very fond of me—but knows nothing of my engagement, and I am sure would throw every obstacle in my way if he suspected it. I want to ask you how to act. The young lady is a Miss Willing. She is the loveliest angel that ever gladdened earth! She adores me—and I worship the ground she walks upon! Your affectionate nephew, FRANK BLOUNT.” Poor Frank! But here's a postscript. (*Turns over page—reading.*)

“P.S. They say here that your ward, Miss Trevor, is staying with you: if so, will you kindly contrive that I may avoid her. I met her a year ago, and I thought her a most conceited and frivolous person. How different from Miss Willing!—Yours, F. B.” It seems that Frank is not likely to get on well with his future aunt.

Re-enter BUTTONS, S.E.R., followed by FRANK BLOUNT.

Buttons. Mr. Frank Blount, Esquire.

(*SQUIRE and FRANK shake hands.*)

Buttons. (Aside, and pointing to FRANK.)—

“The glass of fashion, and the mould of form;

The observed of *hall* observers——”

(*SQUIRE looks round at him—BUTTONS starts.*) Yezzir!

(*Exit, rapidly, S.E.R.*)

Frank. (R.C.) Really, my dear uncle, I never saw you look so blooming!

Squire. (L.c., gaily.) There may be reasons for that, Frank, which you shall know by-and-by. But now, sit down, and tell me all about this love affair. A pretty girl, eh, you dog!

(*Hits him in the ribs.*)

Frank. Pretty? She's angelic, she's divine! She's——

Squire. Thank you, that'll do. If you love each other as you say you do, why don't you carry her off and marry her?

Frank. But how can I consent to deceive my friend, at whose house she is staying? Surely it wouldn't be at all honorable to visit his house, and accept his hospitality, and then to carry on a secret love intrigue under his very roof, contrary to what I know would be his wishes?

Squire. Bah! Stuff! Nonsense! The young fellows of the present day are mere machines! Wooden logs! Numskulls! "All's fair in love and war!" Why, when I was your age—or, egad, at my present age—do you think I would wait to argue on such a subject? No, sir; no argument. Touch and go! Pop! Carry her off! Carry her off, you dog!

Frank. But the laws of hospitality, sir?

Squire. Laws of your grandmother, sir! I tell you, "All's fair in love and war!" Carry her off! Carry her off! Ha, ha, ha! And now, we'll go to the breakfast-room, and you shall see your future aunt!

Frank. My future aunt, sir? Do I know the lady?

Squire. The young lady you are pleased to stigmatize as "conceited and frivolous"—Miss Constance Trevor.

Frank. You must forgive me, sir; for, of course, I knew nothing of—but is it all arranged?

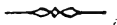
Squire. As good as settled, Frank. Ha, ha, ha! (*Conceitedly.*) She dotes upon me, you dog! (*Hits him in the ribs.*) But, from delicacy, she has postponed her final answer till this afternoon. Now, I wish you to induce her to give her answer this very minute. I am all impatience. The blood of all the Blounts is mounting to fever heat! I will find occasion to leave you with her. Will you try your best, Frank?

Frank. Certainly, sir. But I must say I wonder at your choice. Compared with Miss Willing, she——

Squire. Oh, of course! Can't you leave comparisons alone? You are going to marry a fine girl. Well, in my opinion, I am going to marry a fine girl! Come along, and see her.

(*SQUIRE and FRANK nudge each other in the ribs, and exeunt laughing, S.E.L.*)

ACT DROP.



ACT II.

SCENE.—*Same as in Act. I.*

Enter JEMIMA, S.E.L., with large paper-box, which she places on library table. Takes off lid cautiously. Clasps her hands admiringly.

Jemima. Oh, what a love of a wedding-robe. White satting, horange flowers, and lace! Oh, my gracious! Shouldn't *I* like to have the chance of being married in such a 'eavenly dress. And on'y to think that p'raps Miss Constance won't make use of it, after all! For I'm certing the Squire will never give his consent to her marrying hany one but himself. And *that* isn't likely.

(Sings.) "For it's 'ard to give the 'and,
Where the 'art can nevor be."

What a shame that brutes of men should go and leave their money to their daughters under such 'ateful conditions. Ah, if there was what there *ought* to be—a "Woman's Parlyment"—wouldn't I speak up on the subject! *(Gets up on chair, makes a truncheon of the draft paper, and assumes oratorical attitude.)* Hem! Mrs. Speaker, and sisteren,—hem!—it is time that women should be free! Hem! The men have always said that we are divine. Then let them worship us! They say they are our slaves! Then let them behave as sich!—let *them* work, and let *hus* spend their earnings! Listen to me, Missis Speaker—

Enter BUTTONS, applauding, S.E.R.

Buttons. Brayvo! 'Ear, 'ear! Brayvo! Very much bravisimo!

Jemima. (L.C.) Listeners mustn't expect to hear good of themselves!

Buttons. (R.C.) *Jemima*, I give up to you in heverything! But, don't get off that cheer for another minute; for you *do* look lovely! O, *Jemima*! If I was a heminent sculpture, I'd make a statute of you, just as you stand now; and I'd fall down and washup your hancles! *(JEMIMA jumps off chair.)*

"Grease was in hall her form! 'eaving in 'er heye!
In hev'ry gesture, dignity, and——"

Jemima. Don't be a fool, Charles! *(Hits him over the head with paper roll.)* Quoting stage plays again! As to dignity, it's what I don't pertend to.

Buttons. And I like you the better for it! For my part, I never *was* partial to an 'aughty beauty!

Jemima. A naughty beauty! I should think not, indeed! (*Tosses her head.*) For shame, sir!

Buttons. My love, you misunderstand me. I meant to say that I'm not fond of a 'aughty style of beauty.

Jemima. Then you "'aughty" be more careful how you express yourself. Do you see the joke? You do? Capital! (*They both laugh.*) But come here, and I'll show you something worth looking at.

Buttons. *Jemima, it's lovely! But I foresee it will look lovelier when you are inside on it!*

Jemima. Me!

Buttons. Yes, *you!* Miss Constance is certing to keep single, rather than marry the Squire. Her dresses are your perkisites; she can't do less than give you this one;—and oh! what a wista of 'appiness unfolds itself! I behold myself leading you to the halter! Our 'opes will at last be realized when the marriage lines are 'auded to us!

Enter SQUIRE and FRANK, C.D.

Squire. (*To BUTTONS.*) What the dence are you talking about? "Halters," "ropes," and "lines!" Some of your stage spouting, I suppose? (*To BUTTONS and JEMIMA.*) You can go. (*To FRANK, pointing to BUTTONS.*) A very honest fellow, but (*pointing to his forehead*) a little touched *here*, you know.

(*BUTTONS makes an indignant gesture, strikes himself on the chest, and is about to declaim, when the SQUIRE suddenly looks round, and impatiently motions him to leave the room.*)

Buttons. Yezzir! (*Exit, rapidly, S.E.R.; JEMIMA S.E.L.*)

Frank. (R.C.) Egad, sir, there's another loving couple! If my adorable Miss Willing were only here, the house would be a perfect Agapemone!

Squire. (L.C.) Never mind *them*, Frank. The time is precious, and I want to enlist your aid with my darling Coustance. We can talk about Miss Willing another time. Now, it seems to me, Frank, that the best thing you can do is to point out to Constance that in marrying a sedate, quiet, middle-aged cuntry gentleman like myself, she will be far likelier to obtain solid happiurss than if she were to marry a young fellow—of your age, for example.

Frank. I don't think it would be easy to convince Miss Willing of that, old gentleman.

Squire. Bother Miss Willing! (*FRANK starts up.*) At least, I don't exactly mean *that*. And don't you call me *old* gentleman, I do mean *that*! (*FRANK sits down again.*) But I really think, Frank, you might see that it is rather selfish to be always talking about *your* inamorata when I want to be talking about *mine*. It's really selfish!

Frank. My dear uncle, from this moment I devote myself to your interests alone. Leave to my discretion the line of advocacy which

I shall adopt, and if I don't make Miss Trevor agree to wear yonder wedding-robe within the stipulated time, my name isn't—

Squire. Hush! (*Looks off S.E.L.*) Here she comes; thinking of me, no doubt. (*FRANK retires R.C.*) But I don't like these delays. Why couldn't she say "Yes" at once? . (*Cross to R.*

Enter CONSTANCE, S.E.L.

Squire. (*To CONSTANCE, as he quits the room.*) Back in a minute—back in a minute!

(*Exit S.E.R., kissing his hand to CONSTANCE, who looks down, pretending to blush.*

Frank. (*Comes down R.C.*) At last!

Constance. Well, have I acted my part satisfactorily?

Frank. Splendidly! (*Both laugh.*) The illustrious Buttons himself might envy you!

Constance. (*L.C.*) But I trust I have a soul above Buttons, Frank?

Frank. Let us hope so, for I'm your soul! But we haven't many minutes to spare. However, we may as well sit down. (*Places chair for CONSTANCE, and one for himself at a little distance.*) Now, in the first place—

Constance. (*Coughs, then attracts FRANK's attention to the distance between their respective chairs, she then speaks.*) Don't you think, Frank, that I should hear you better if you were to sit a little nearer?

Frank. (*Brings his chair quickly close to hers.*) The fact is, I was thinking of the governor's return, and besides, I was afraid to trust myself too near you.

Constance. Afraid! Why, I won't eat you!

Frank. Well, I was afraid I might be tempted to—

(*Kisses CONSTANCE.*

Constance. Frank, you are a very ill-behaved, forward person. How dare you?

Frank. Well, then, I'll take it back! (*About to kiss her again, she keeps him back.*) My darling, only consider! Two months since I last saw you! Nothing but letters to kiss! All fiction, no reality. If I did wrong in taking one delicious kiss, let me make amends by giving you half-a-dozen. (*Kisses CONSTANCE.*

Squire. (*Without c.*) Buttons, let us have lunch in five minutes from this time!

(*FRANK and CONSTANCE sit at opposite sides of the room.*

Enter SQUIRE, c., listening.

Frank. (*R., as if continuing a previous conversation.*) What need I add more, Miss Trevor, in behalf of a worthy man? You have already received from my lips the expression of my sentiments; and I should be happy to repeat—

Constance. (i.) No occasion, sir, I thank you. To tell the truth, I have long thought Mr. Blount the safest person to whom to confide my future happiness. Otherwise your advocacy would have been fruitless; for, to tell you the truth, I cannot greatly compliment you on the manner in which you have discharged your task.

Frank. Miss Trevor, I must ask your forgiveness. In point of fact, my thoughts have been occupied by another subject. There is a Miss Willing, madam, to whom I am devotedly attached, and who is devotedly attached to me. There are certain obstacles in the way; but I hope ere long to be married to her; and if you should still at that time be single, I should be delighted if you would honor the ceremony with your presence.

Constance. But I'm afraid poor dear Mr. Blount won't consent to a long delay. I tell you what I propose. The day I marry Mr. Blount, you shall be married, on the same day, at the same church!

Squire. (Coming forward c., delighted.) Hear! hear! hear!

(Laughs and dances.)

Constance. (Pretending to be startled.) Ah! Oh, sir, how could you startle one so? (Looking down, demurely.) I hope you haven't been there long?

Squire. Long enough to know I'm the happiest fellow on earth! Give me your hand, Frank, my dear boy. (Shaking hands with FRANK.) You have behaved nobly! (FRANK makes deprecating movements.) I say you have! You have carried out my wishes completely! And now, (turning to CONSTANCE, who pretends to blush) I suppose I needn't wait till six o'clock, now, eh? (Takes CONSTANCE's hand, which she gives him timidly.) Come, courage, my little pet! That little word, "Yes!"

Constance. (Timidly.) You forget, sir, that I am to give you my answer at six o'clock.

Squire. But why wait so long, my darling? I assure you these delays keep me in a fever. Look here! (Goes to box on table, and shows wedding-dress.) Here's the wedding-robe, all ready! If you don't wear it at the altar before this day month, half your fortune is lost. Then why delay my happiness by a single hour? Come!

(Tries to put his arm round her waist. She eludes his embrace.)

Constance. (Pouting.) If you are to have your own way after marriage, I don't see why I shouldn't have my way before marriage.

(SQUIRE delighted.)

Frank. Come, sir, what Miss Trevor says is fair enough. What! can't you (whispers to him) simmer down the mounting blood of the Blounts for two hours longer? (Aside to SQUIRE.) It's all right!

Squire. Well, be it so! I declare these delays make me feel quite

nervous; but if it is dear Constance's determination to keep me in suspense till six o'clock, it must be so. But (*Looking languishingly at CONSTANCE*) I shall exact some very sweet forfeits for this cruelty!

Constance. Ah, I know you are a sad, teasing creature, you naughty, naughty man.

(*Puts his hands playfully.* *SQUIRE, in ecstasy, shakes hands violently with FRANK.*

Enter BUTTONS, S.E.R.

Buttons. Lunch is ready in the 'all, ma'am!

(*SQUIRE gives an arm to CONSTANCE, and looks round to FRANK, who has retired up stage, laughing. FRANK gives her a letter L., which she conceals in her dress.*

Squire. Come along! come along! Now for a glass of champagne!

Buttons. (*Following them, strikes theatrical attitude, with arm extended.*) "Stand not upon the horder of your going, but go at once!

(*SQUIRE and CONSTANCE exit S.E.R.—BUTTONS follows. FRANK after laughing heartily, exits after them.*

[ACT DROP.



ACT III.

SCENE.—*Same as before.*

SQUIRE discovered seated in easy chair, dressed in gorgeous array, large nosegay in his coat.

Squire. Only wants twenty minutes to six. I declare I feel in such a flutter, that I'm almost frightened. And Frank, who ought to be here to encourage me—why doesn't he come? (*Rings bell.*

Enter BUTTONS, c. The bell keeps ringing.

Buttons. "Silence that dreadful bell! it frights the isle——"

Squire. (c.) Oh, here you are, at last. Go to Mr. Frank's room directly, and tell him I wish to see him, here.

Buttons. (R.C.) Beg parding, sir,—Mr. Frank, sir?

Squire. "Mr. Frank, sir? Why, yes—Mr. Frank, sir? Don't I speak plainly?"

Buttons. Certingly, sir. But Mr. Frank, sir, went away quite sudding, two hours ago ;—not long after lunch, sir. (*Aside.*) What a awful crammer ! But five pounds is five pounds ; and that's what Mr. Frank's to give me.

Squire. (*Who has been walking up and down much vexed.*) Confound it !—at such a time too—such selfishness !

Buttons. Beg parding, sir ; but I think Mr. Frank left a letter for you on the libery table.

(*Looks for letter, finds it, and hands it to SQUIRE, who snatches it from him—BUTTONS retires.*)

Squire. Why the deuce couldn't you say so before ?

(*Opens and reads letter. While he is doing so, BUTTONS goes through a tragic scene in dumb show, gesticulating violently, and suppresses giggling. SQUIRE looking up, sees him, comes behind him, takes him by the back of the neck, and trundles him out of the room S.E.R.*)

Squire. Confound the idiot ! Let us see—let us see again ! (*Reading.*) “Sorry—abrupt departure—knew you wouldn't let me go if you knew it—impossible to stay longer away from Miss Willing ; for she is the most angelic, most——” Hum ! hum ! hum ! Half a page of superlatives about Miss Willing. Confound her ! (*Resumes reading.*) “Finally, let me trust that the approaching marriage may bring as much satisfaction to Miss Trevor and yourself as I can sincerely say it will to me.” (*Throws the letter on table.*) Hang his sympathy ! Why isn't he here ?

Enter JEMIMA, C.

Jemima. Miss Trevor's compliments, sir, and she will be with you in five minutes' time. (*Going L.*)

Squire. (*Startled.*) Good gracious ! I mean, I'm delighted ! *Jemima*, come here. You're a very good girl, *Jemima*. (*JEMIMA curtsies.*) And a very prettty girl, *Jemima* ! (*She curtsies again.*) I was thinking of giving you a sovereign, *Jemima*.

(*Feels in his pockets.*)

Jemima. (*L.C., curtseying and holding out her hand.*) Thank ye, sir !

Squire. (*C.*) And so I will give you a sovereign, *Jemima*, another time !

Jemima. Thank you for nothing, sir ! (*Tosses her head.*)

Squire. Fact is, as you see, I've changed my dress, and I forgot my purse. But you can rely upon me, *Jemima*. Now, come nearer, *Jemima*. I suppose you know that in a few minutes I am to receive from the lips of Miss Trevor her acceptance of my heart and hand ?

Jemima. Me, sir ? How should I know anything about such——

Squire. (*Chuckling her under the chin.*) “Me, sir ?” Miss Innocence ! As if I didn't know that ladies' maids know everything ? Come, confess you know all about it !

Jemima. Well, sir, I won't deny it.

Squire. Well, do you think your mistress is fond of me?

Jemima. I should say she dotes upon you, sir. (*Aside.*) Oh, Miss Constance! what hawful lies you are making me tell!

Squire. (*Adjusting his pink satin tie, conceitedly.*) You don't think she ever cared so much for any one else, *Jemima*?

Jemima. Lor', sir! barring the three months she spent with her haunt at Scarborough, what chance has she had of seeing any one? For my part, I should say she never thought of hany one—(*Aside.*)—now for a good one!—(*Aloud.*)—till your honor proposed to her!

(*SQUIRE rubs his hands, and walks up and down the room delighted.*)

Jemima. (*Aside.*) Oh, my gracions! How hawful to have to tell such a lot of fibs in such a little time!

Squire. (*Coming up to JEMIMA, and placing his hand on her shoulder.*) *Jemima*! You want to marry Buttons, and he wants to marry you. The day that Miss Constance Trevor becomes Mrs. Francis Blount you shall be married too. Married to two, and made one of! And I'll give you the lease of the "Blount Arms." *Jemima*, take your Buttons, marry him, and have a lot of little Buttons'.

Jemima. Oh, thank you, sir.

(*Curtseys. SQUIRE takes hold of her chin, and puts his arm round her waist.*)

Enter BUTTONS, S.E.R., followed by CONSTANCE.

Buttons. (R.C.) Miss Constance. (*Sees SQUIRE trying to kiss JEMIMA—he starts back.*) Ah! what do I behold?

Squire. (C., to CONSTANCE.) I was just inquiring of your maid, Miss Trevor, if—in point of fact—if—if—

Jemima. (L.) Yes, mim, that was what it was.

Buttons. (*As Othello.*) "False—false to me!" (*Goes up L., laughing.*)

(*Exit S.E.R., followed by JEMIMA, laughing.*)

Constance. (R.C.) I fear, Mr. Blount, that you are a very sad, naughty, naughty, naughty man. (*Playfully slapping his hands.*)

Squire. (C., *affectedly.*) Always was a ladies' man, my dear. But, now comes the most exciting moment of my life. Tell me, at once, my fate! (*Theatrically.*) At once!

(*Makes as if he would kneel at her feet, but thinks better of it.*)

Constance. * (*Pretending to blush.*) I really can't say it. (*Goes to library table R.C., and takes sheet of paper, pen and ink.*) I'll write down my choice. (*Archly—turning to SQUIRE.*) Of course, you won't approve of it? (*Writes at table.*)

Squire. (*Aside, L.C., delighted.*) Dear little provoking darling! U-u-r! o-h!

Constance. There! (*Giving paper to SQUIRE, and hiding her face behind her fan.*) There, you naughty, naughty man!

Squire. (Reads.) "I hereby choose, as my future husband, Francis Blount, Esq., and am willing to marry him before my twenty-second birthday.—CONSTANCE 'TREVOR." Hurrah! Of course I won't approve of it. Oh, of course not!

(Sits at table R.C. and writes. Rises and hands paper to CONSTANCE, whose head is averted until she has possession of the paper.)

Constance. (Reading.) "And I heartily approve the choice made by Constance Trevor as above written.—FRANCIS BLOUNT." *(To SQUIRE.)* Oh, you dear, good duck of a naughty man! Of course, you mean what you say?

Squire. Of course! I should think so, indeed! And now, my little darling, I must claim one—just one little kiss, as—

Constance. Stop a moment, my dear sir! (Goes to the wardrobe R., and taps against the door.) Frank, dear, you may come out, now!

Frank. (Stepping out.) Egad, I should have been choked in another three minutes!

Squire. (L., aghast, his mouth open with amazement.) Frank!

Constance. That is only a nickname, sir. Permit me to introduce you to my future husband, Mr. Francis Blount.

Squire. (To FRANK.) Why, you said you were engaged to a Miss Willing!

Frank. So I am, sir (embracing CONSTANCE), to a miss, willing to marry me.

Squire. (To CONSTANCE.) And you said you had an aversion to marriage!

Constance. You must have misunderstand my pronunciation, sir. I have a stong aversion—not to marriage, but to marry age!

(FRANK and CONSTANCE laugh. The SQUIRE looks unhappy and grins aside.)

Frank. Come, my dear uncle, don't be too severe upon us! Constance and I have loved each other since those happy days of childhood, when we used to ramble about your park as playmates. You know that I am rich enough to care little for the loss of all my wife's fortune. But I thought it my duty to her to concoct the little plot which has proved so successful.

Squire. Oh, you accomplished rascal! I mean (imitates) you naughty, naughty man! O-h!

(They laugh.)

Frank. To throw you off your guard, I pretended an attachment elsewhere; and under my instructions, my little Constance succeeded in making you suppose that the Mr. Francis Blount whom she was ready to marry was yourself.

Squire. (To CONSTANCE.) Oh, you hypocritical young—

Constance. Naughty man!

(Laughs.)

Frank. My final instructions were given to Constance in a letter which I slipped into her hand as we were going in to lunch. I came in here, wrote the farewell note which you received, and quitted the

house. Turned back round the corner of the lodge into the shrubbery ; smoked two Cabanas ; made my way round through the shrubbery to back window ; got in ; shut myself in wardrobe ; and you know the rest.

Squire. (*Rings bell violently.*) And Jemima—and Buttons?

Frank. Were accomplices.

Enter BUTTONS and JEMIMA from C.D.

Squire. (*Claps his hand to his forehead, and falls into chair c.*) Good heavens ! To think that an ass like Buttons—

Buttons. (*Coming forward with dignity, L.C.—JEMIMA L.*) Beg your parding, sir ; but when a hindividual thinks proper to call another hindividual a “hass——”

(*JEMIMA stops him—pushes him into L. corner. They talk apart.*

Frank. (*Aside to SQUIRE.*) Look here, uncle, I wasn't in that wardrobe without having my moral sense shocked by your flirtation with the future Mrs. Buttons. You may rely upon it, Buttons is jealous, and may do you a mischief. Come, forget and forgive. (*To CONSTANCE.*) Constance, add your entreaties to mine !

Constance. Come now, dear guardy, relent, and give us your blessing, like the good old guardys in the good old comedies.

(*She laughs. FRANK and CONSTANCE kneel at the feet of the SQUIRE.*

Squire. Well, I suppose I must. There ! “you naughty, naughty man ! (*Gives them away—gets c.*) After all, I am but punished for advising Frank to do exactly what he has done. So, I must say, like the man in the play—let's see—what the deuce does he say ?

Buttons. (*Stepping forward to prompt SQUIRE, and declaiming.*)

“Now is the winter of hour discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York !
And hall the clouds——”

Squire. No, *that's* not it. (*Suddenly recollecting.*) I know ! (*To FRANK.*) “Take her, you dog—and be happy !” *That's* it !

(*CONSTANCE and FRANK both laugh. BUTTONS and JEMIMA in imitation of FRANK and CONSTANCE now kneel at the SQUIRE's feet.*

Squire. (*c., amazed.*) Hullo ! what next ! What does all *this* mean ?

Buttons. Your blessing, sir ! A blessing for Buttons !

Jemima. And for Mrs. Jemima Buttons *that is* to be !

Buttons. Not forgetting all the little Buttons' !

(*JEMIMA stops him.*

Squire. Well, young woman, after the barefaced tarrydiddles you've told me, I think you must be coolness personified ! (*To BUTTONS.*) Get up, boobies. (*BUTTONS and JEMIMA rise.*) I sup-

pose I must pay the full penalty for being ridiculous. (*To JEMIMA.*) You may marry Booby—Buttons, I mean, as soon as you like.

Buttons. (*Embracing JEMIMA.*) Oh, Jemima!

Jemima. (*To BUTTONS.*) Oh, giminy!

(*Embrace.*)

Squire. (*Looking at his watch.*) Only wants ten minutes to dinner-time. Now, does anybody else want anything? or is everybody satisfied.

Frank. We are, fully so, my dear uncle; but (*pointing to audience*) dare we ask if they are?

Squire. I should think you ought be ashamed to ask them, after the manner in which you have treated your old uncle!

Constance. Nay, one moment! They will not fail to remember—that in this very room—this very day—this very undutiful nephew (*pointing to FRANK*) was told—by a very great authority on such subjects, this very remarkable truth—that—

“All’s fair in love, as well as in war!”

(*SQUIRE shakes his forefinger, laughingly, at CONSTANCE; FRANK embraces her; BUTTONS, with one arm round JEMIMA’S waist, points melodramatically upwards with the disengaged hand, until the fall of the*

Disposition of Characters.

FRANK.
R.

CONSTANCE.
R.C.

SQUIRE.
C.

JEMIMA.
L.C.

BUTTONS.
L.

CURTAIN.

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